

TERRESTRIAL ANIMAL HEALTH STANDARDS COMMISSION REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2007

USA Comments

DRAFT GUIDELINES ON DOG POPULATION CONTROL

Article 4

Considerations in planning a dog population control programme ~~measures~~

Important considerations are as follows:

3. Legislation
 - i) Registration and identification of dogs and licensing of dog shelters/rescue groups;

Rationale: If all sources of dogs are to be accounted for and managed appropriately (including ensuring adherence to humane animal care standards), then one should consider regulating the acquisition, production, and release of dogs from not only breeders, but also shelters and rescue groups; therefore text should be added to i) dog shelters, indicating that shelters/rescue groups might also be licensed.

Article 5

Control measures

1. Education and ~~promotion~~ legislation ~~of~~ for responsible ownership ~~(To be completed)~~

The owned dog population is a primary source of stray dogs, through the abandonment of unwanted dogs and their offspring, and through allowing owned dogs to roam unrestricted, contributing to the stray population. Encouraging dog owners to be more responsible will reduce the number of dogs allowed to roam, improve the health and welfare of dogs, and minimise the risk that dogs pose to the community. The promotion of responsible dog ownership through legislation and education is a necessary part of a dog population management programme. Collaboration with responsible animal welfare NGOs, dog fancy NGOs, and private veterinarians and veterinary organizations will assist Veterinary Authorities in establishing and maintaining programmes.

Rationale: There are other NGOs that warrant inclusion in the education collaboration process of responsible dog ownership. These groups include dog fancy organization such as kennel clubs, performance sport organizations and veterinary organizations.

5. Management of dogs removed from communities

b) Management should address:

vii) staff training

Rationale: Management should be responsible for addressing the training of staff for safety and appropriate care and handling of dogs.

b) First paragraph, third sentence:

Dogs that are removed from a community may be reunited with the owner or offered to new owners for adoption (rehoming). This provides an opportunity to promote responsible ownership and good animal health care (including rabies vaccination). ~~including animal health care through vaccination against common diseases of dogs, control of ecto- and endo-parasites, and vaccination against major zoonotic diseases such as rabies. Incentives for dog reproduction control may be provided through the provision of neutering services at a reduced rate or the release for adoption of only neutered animals.~~ Sterilisation of dogs prior to adoption should be considered mandatory. The suitability of new owners to adopt dogs should be assessed and owners matched with available animals. The effectiveness of ~~this strategy i.e. offering dogs to new owners~~ rehoming may be limited due to the suitability and number of dogs.

Rationale: Many of the animals that contribute to the stray animal and shelter population stem from unplanned births. It is essential that an animal control programme avoid placing intact animals back into the general population where they would only contribute to increasing the stray dog population.

b) Third paragraph, third sentence:

This method is not applicable in all situations and may be illegal in countries where legislation prohibits the abandonment of dogs. Problems caused by dogs, such as noise, faecal pollution and traffic accidents, would not be alleviated as dogs are returned to the local community and their movements are not restricted. If the local community has owned dogs, consideration should be given to the potential encouragement of abandonment of unwanted. In the situation where many dogs are owned, a population control programme that focuses on neutering and responsible ownership may be more appropriate.

Rationale: The sentence "If the local community has owned dogs, consideration should be given to the potential encouragement of abandonment of unwanted." is not a complete sentence. Additional text is needed to provide clarification of the intent of the guideline for the reader.

9) Regulation of ~~commercial~~ dog dealers, breeders and shelters

~~Regulation~~ “Regulatory authority” is needed to ensure that dog breeders, ~~and~~ dealers ~~and~~ shelters are identified by the *Competent Authority* and are committed to raising, ~~and~~ selling ~~and~~ rehoming, physically and psychologically healthy animals, as unhealthy animals may be more likely to be abandoned to become part of the stray population. Regulations should include specific requirements for accommodation, provision of suitable food, drink and bedding, adequate exercise, veterinary care and *disease* control. Breeders, ~~and~~ dealers, ~~and~~ shelter establishments should be inspected at regular intervals, including veterinary inspections. Advice on proper animal care should be given to all new owners of dogs.

Rationale: A comprehensive dog control program requires the proposed regulatory authority to ensure that animal shelters and rescue groups (in addition to dog breeders and dealers) are identified by the Competent Authority and are committed to the release of physically and psychologically healthy animals to new owners. Additionally, flexibility in adaptation of a dog population control program to the needs of the community and stakeholder base is important; this implies “regulatory authority” as compared with “regulation.” Retention of the “commercial” qualifier in the title of this section is not consistent with its removal in previous sections of the document (for example, Article 4.3.g.). We therefore recommend the title of this section be changed to: Regulation of dog dealers, breeders and shelters and that the text of the first sentence of the accompanying paragraph be changed to read: Regulatory authority ~~Regulation~~ is needed to ensure that dog breeders, ~~and~~ dealers ~~and~~ shelters are identified by the Competent Authority and are committed to raising, ~~and~~ selling, and rehoming physically and psychologically healthy animals...”

10. Reduction in dog bite incidence

The most effective means of reducing prevalence of dog bites are education and placing responsibility on the owner; ~~not the animal~~. Dog owners should be educated ~~trained~~ in principles of responsible pet ownership as described in Article 5.1. Legal mechanisms that enable the competent authorities to impose penalties or otherwise deal with irresponsible owners are necessary. Mandatory registration and identification schemes will facilitate the effective application of such mechanisms. Young children are the group at highest ~~most at-risk group~~ for dog bites. Education programmes focussed on appropriate dog-directed behaviour have been demonstrated to be effective in reducing dog bite prevalence and these programmes should be encouraged.

Rationale: Typographical error

11. Euthanasia

Table 1: List of methods for the euthanasia of dogs (cont)

Euthanasia method	Specific method	Animal welfare concerns/ implications	Key animal welfare requirements	Considerations relating to operator security	Advantages	Disadvantages
Gaseous	Carbon monoxide (CO)	Gas is aversive . Inadequate concentration of CO is not lethal and can cause suffering. Signs of distress (convulsions, vocalization and agitation) may occur.	Compressed CO in cylinders must be used to achieve and maintain adequate concentration, which must be monitored. Note: fumes from gasoline engines are irritant and this source of CO is not recommended.	Very hazardous for operator - gas is odorless and causes both high and chronic toxicity.	Dog dies quite rapidly if concentration of 4 to 6% used. No odor (therefore no aversive effect) . Gas is not flammable or explosive except at concentration greater than 10%.	
	Rationale: There is a discrepancy in Table 1 concerning whether carbon monoxide is or is not aversive. The discrepancy should be clarified for the reader to comply with the intent of the guideline.	The column above on animal welfare concerns/implications indicates that “Gas is aversive.”			The column above on advantages states there is “No odor (therefore no aversive effect).”	